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3. We were encircled by the Germans for eight days. The command finally concluded that the only way out for us was to surrender to the enemy. On the eighth day the whole division and its staff, with the exception of 300 soldiers and two officers, surrendered to the enemy. Nearby was a highway which cut through the Volosov forest; the road, however, was controlled by German light tanks. It was necessary to stay close to the road and then run across it into the woods on the opposite side, from where it was possible to proceed toward Gatchina and to by-pass Volosov. However, since the command had turned traitor and did not wish to fight, it went over to the enemy and left 300 men to their fate.
4. The remaining 300 men, plus about 500 more soldiers who had been wandering about the woods, rushed across the highway. The German tanks opened machine-gun fire on us; the majority of men were left dead on the road and only about 350 men reached the woods. Having reached Gatchina, we found almost no one in the city since the townspeople had been evacuated to Leningrad. Thus, nine guard divisions recruited from men of the Home Guard, who should have been used to support the regular army fighting on the borders of the Baltic States, shamelessly perished--as did also the regular army itself in the course of August and September 1941. The remnants of the soldiers and officers of the ten detachments and regiments drifted in groups and individually. Each man, upon reaching Leningrad, which soon was encircled by the iron ring of the enemy, was sent to a so-called distribution point at No 90 Fontanka and received a ration allotment. The soldiers who had escaped the encirclement with enthusiasm recounted their heroic deeds, looking for recognition of their actions if not as heroic, then at least as proof of their devotion. Learning of this, the NKVD quickly screened these hero-enthusiasts. These people were kept under special surveillance and later placed in disciplinary companies. For some reason or other they were looked upon with suspicion by the NKVD.
5. It must be noted that Leningrad was flooded with soldiers at the beginning of the blockade. The Leningrad Front then had under it the 55th Army, 42nd Army, 23rd Army, 2nd Shock Army, 21st Army and a whole group of separate regiments and units not part of any army but subordinate directly to the Front. Besides the five armies mentioned above there was also the 36th ZSB with 55,000-75,000 men and seven penal divisions of the NKVD. The trouble with this imposing force, which should have been able to break any encirclement, was that it had neither tanks, airplanes, artillery and other equipment, nor rifles for the soldiers or pistols for the officers. These armies had one rifle for every 3-4 soldiers, one revolver for three officers. In addition, the rifles were old and rusty, and of Canadian, Spanish, Finnish and various other foreign makes. To add to this, there was no bread, and men were dying of hunger and disease. There was no laundry or batons, no underclothing or shoes. The men were literally freezing to death. There were no horses, carts, trucks, medicines or other basic necessities for conducting a war.
6. The amount of war materiel and army equipment on hand at the beginning of World War II was doubtlessly vast, but the powerful attack of the Germans in the first months of the war plus the confusion of the Soviet Government itself, forced the army to abandon everything and run or be killed or taken prisoner. Besides this, German planes constantly raided arsenals, tank parks and motor pools, airfields, fuel stores and food depots.

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7. During the night of 26 October 1941, the 56th Division occupied the forward lines on the so-called Uritsk sector. The forward lines were located in the outskirts of the city [Leningrad] beyond Avtovo II, near the Farel' hospital. In this sector of the front, over the 47-day period from 27 October to 14 December 1941, our division attacked these lines with only rifles. During these attacks we lost 16,000 men and were re-inforced three times. With 14,000 men we crossed over to the Kolpino-Krasnyy Bor sector. On 23 December 1941, three divisions on our sector, including mine, received orders from the commander of the 55th Army to attack the enemy and to take the town of Tosno in order to gain control of the Moscow-Leningrad railroad line and to delay the advance of the Germans on Moscow, but here too we were unsuccessful. The 56th, 125th, and 72nd Divisions were almost completely annihilated, and we were unable to dislodge the Germans.
8. The next attempt to break through the ring of the blockade began simultaneously on three sectors during the severe January frost of 1942. Into operations on the Kolpino-Mga sector were drawn all detachments of the 55th Army; on the Uritsk sector the 42nd Army went into action and on the Pushkin sector the 13th and 111th Divisions began their attack. I do not know the losses incurred by other divisions and units, but my division lost about 8,000 men. From April to 10 May 1942, in the Kolpino sector, we were ordered to collect all the corpses that had remained unburied through the winter, because epidemics were feared with the coming of spring. The Izhersk plant in Kolpino was re-equipped for the cremation of the corpses, as there was no place to bury them; to the Izhersk ovens alone were committed more than 80,000 bodies, the equivalent of five and a half divisions. And this was only one sector.
9. It would be a mistake to think that so many men perished from enemy action; among this number should be counted those who died from wounds because they were not removed from the battlefield, those who bled to death, those who froze to death, not to mention those who died from hunger. In addition, when various regiments and battalions began to retreat (although the Germans were not attacking) the NKVD penal units in the rear of the advancing units opened machine-gun fire upon the retreating men, with cries of "Forward, traitors!", and mowed down hundreds of soldiers and officers.
10. [redacted] with this [56th] division on this sector of the front until July 1942. The division remained on the Kolpino sector until the breaking of the blockade, ie until 14 January 1944.
11. [redacted] the 36th ZSB (Reserve Infantry Brigade), [redacted] was formed at the end of 1941 and was subordinate directly to the commander of the Leningrad Front. It acted as a source of manpower for all detachments and units on the blockaded Leningrad Front. Because of this, the brigade never had its own equipment or weapons.
12. The brigade and its staff was stationed in the suburb of Toksovo and had under it the following military units: The 48th ZSP (reserve infantry regiment), which was permanently stationed in the suburbs of Leningrad near Irinovka and which regularly comprised from 12,000 to 15,000 men; a similar regiment--the 76th ZSP, with the same number of men--was located in the Toksovo area, together with brigade headquarters. Another such regiment, again with the same number of men, was the 386th ZSP, located in Volkhov beyond Lake Ladoga. The 36th ZSB also had under it a so-called PRB (reception and distribution battalion), numbering up to 15,000 men. In addition, there were also nine BV (convalescent battalions), each with up to 2,500 men, quartered on various streets in Leningrad. Thus, the 36th ZSB regularly numbered from 65,000 to 75,000 men. The brigade, together with its various units, made up four full divisions.

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13. The main source of manpower for the brigade was the 300th ZSP. Constantly, contingents of draftees from oblasts of Siberia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and other places, were sent to the 300th ZSP in Volkhov. From here the 306th ZSP sent these men across Lake Ladoga to the 48th and 76th ZSPs and the PRBs; in summer the men went by ship, but in winter they travelled over the famous ice-road over the lake. The men remained up to ten days in those regiments, and during that period were instructed from 16 to 18 hours a day in rifle and machine-gun marksmanship, and in the use of the bayonet. During training the men used wooden dummy rifles. At the end of 10 days, they received uniforms, were drawn up into companies for the march and without weapons were sent under guard to the forward lines to replace losses of divisions and units. There on the forward line, they received weapons and occupied trenches. The second source of manpower for the 36th ZSB was the 9th BV (convalescent battalion). Into this battalion flowed men from all the Leningrad hospitals, the former sick and wounded who, after convalescence, entered this BV and were kept there for ten days. After this period, by order of brigade headquarters, they were made up into companies and were assigned to the front as replacements for detachments and units.
14. By order of the commander of the Leningrad Front and the chief of the Front's medical detachment, the hospitals were forced daily to give to the BV seven per cent of the men then under treatment. Thus, every day 5,000 to 6,000 or more men entered the BV. It must be noted that after convalescence the sick and wounded did not receive a furlough or were not demobilized. All of the soldiers and officers were subject to return to the front, with the exception of amputees and the totally blinded. The majority of combatants on the Leningrad Front had been wounded three, four, or more times and that many times were sent back to the front after treatment. They remained on the front until they were either killed or were so mutilated that they could not move without assistance. These are the various functions which the 36th ZSB and its units filled.
15. [redacted] (hospital for slightly wounded) in Leningrad. [redacted] The hospital was constantly filled with up to 3,000 sick and wounded soldiers and officers. While there I heard about the experimental use of new medicines on Soviet soldiers.
16. [redacted] When the battles for Stalingrad and the Kursk-Orel bulge were ended and the initiative had passed into the hands of the Red Army, the Leningrad Front began to prepare energetically for the breaking of the blockade. Throughout November 1943, the entire 2nd Shock Army plus the 50th Marine Brigade were transferred by ship from Kronstadt through the Gulf of Finland to the region of Tamengont, south of Oranienbaum, to a small "scrap of ground" on which the army then held only eight populated points. We were completely encircled on one side by the Gulf of Finland, and on the other by the Germans, who held Oranienbaum. We stayed on this "scrap of ground" until 14 January 1944. During this time we did not make a single attack, and soldiers and officers were even summarily sentenced to penal battalions for accidentally firing their weapons. We were afraid to stir up the Germans, because if they had attacked, they would have driven us without any difficulty or loss into the Gulf of Finland.

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17. While we crossed the Finnish Gulf to Temengont, the Germans left us alone, although they knew that troops were being moved. However, in the days following our arrival they did not allow a single ship or barge with provisions or ammunition to reach us but sank everything from the air. The army literally was dying of hunger. At 0700 on 14 January, with the temperature at 28 degrees below freezing (centigrade) and in the midst of a terrible blizzard, our army went into the attack. Our division had the mission of breaking through a sector of the front and of seizing the village of Gory-Kolokol'ni, 20 kilometers away. That morning the entire military machine went into action on the Leningrad Front. The mortifications at Kronshtadt that morning hurled at the enemy more shells than I had seen during the entire war. About twenty American-made planes appeared on the scene. After a six-hour bombardment and the work of the planes, to which there was not a single return shot, we went into the attack. When at about midnight we had taken Gory-Kolokol'ni, we learned that we had been attacking empty air. The Germans had guessed our secret and realized that the game was up, therefore, two days before our offensive, they had quietly stolen away and had gotten so far that we only caught up to them at Forkhov, Pskov, Ostrov, Gdov, and other important cities of Leningrad Oblast.
18. Although no one shot at us on 14 January 1944 and we advanced without opposition, the division was short about 5,000 soldiers and officers the next morning. Lining the 20-25 kilometers of our route were dead or scarcely breathing, starving soldiers. Exhausted, they could not even stand up against the wind, fell down and could not get up again, fully conscious, and helpless they froze to death or died of hunger in the snow. By order of the commander of the Front, special brigades were chosen by the divisions to collect all weapons, cartridges, grenades, and clothing from the dead. Soldiers and officers lay there without even underclothing. After several days, the local authorities compelled the populace to collect and bury the dead. All of the liberated people from young to old, men and women alike, dug common graves and buried the naked dead. "The dead need nothing", said the commander of the 100th Corps, Lieutenant General Tikhonov.
19. From Gory-Kolokol'ni my division moved to Gdov, burned by the Germans before their departure. We tried to cross Lake Peipus in the direction of Estonia but were unsuccessful. On the open lake we suffered a terrible defeat and by order of the commander returned and again headed towards Pskov. The taking of Pskov demanded incredible sacrifice. There the Germans had concentrated considerable forces and barred the way into the city. During the entire month of March and into April we could not defeat the enemy. At the junction of the roads leading to Ostrov and Pskov, where we had to open the route to the Baltic States, the warm weather unexpectedly began in early April, the ground became covered with clover. The roads were so cut up that all the trucks, guns, tanks, and horse trains remained where they were, down to their hubs in mud. It was impossible to reach the front with ammunition, fuel, and provisions. For three or four days we requisitioned all of our food supplies from the local populace. The soldiers and officers, and with them the people, began to starve. The army stopped fighting and marched 35-40 kilometers on foot to a highway to which army depots had rushed supplies. So that the division could support itself for 10 or 12 days while the road was being repaired, a whole regiment of 2,000 men travelled on foot or on horseback in search of food; every other day, each soldier brought into the division supply depot 0-10 kilos of food. This food was used to maintain the troops of the remaining units of the division. During this period our division had no success in battles with the enemy on Lake Peipus.

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20. On 10 April 1944, by order of the Army Commander, we left Pskov and went to Toksovo for reformation and rest. There our division trained vigorously during the month of May. On 10 June 1944 my division was incorporated temporarily into the 21st Army, which was then located next to the 21st Army; on that day we began the advance on Finland. We crossed the river Sestra, without encountering serious opposition, took Terioki, Perkiyarvi and, on 20 June, Vyborg. Six kilometers beyond Vyborg the Finns stopped us on the very border which had been established as a result of the war of 1939-1940. The Finns were entrenched in stone cliffs 100 or more meters high, were well-camouflaged, and would not let us pass. In 12 days of battle we did not advance a step; from their rocky heights the enemy drained our last strength. Every day we had hundreds of dead and even more wounded. The Finns prevented ammunition and provisions from reaching the forward lines; we were also prevented from helping the wounded. It was there that we were forced to stop and to end our campaign in Finland.
21. After the capture of Vyborg, my division returned to the 2nd Shock Army and was sent to Estonia. We marched on the city of Tartu in July. There we met, for the first time, serious resistance from the enemy. In order to break through the front and to clear the mine fields, 1,000 men, of two penal battalions, were sent ahead of the forward units. These men cleaned out all the mine fields and were blown up in the process. Mine specialists seldom worked on the clearing of mine fields without using members of penal battalions. With the taking of Tartu the army grew stronger. Food could be easily obtained; the soldiers lived quite well off the enemy land. After ten days of rest, my division headed for Pyarnu. From Tartu to the outskirts of Pyarnu we did not meet a single German. The Germans were trying simply to hold back our offensive in order to save their main forces. Thus there was no particular opposition. However, after capturing Pyarnu our division was again unlucky. On entering the city, the soldiers and officers broke into basements and stores, where they discovered an abundance of liquor; assorted cognacs, liquors, vodka etc. As a result, more than 1,500 men were poisoned, and of these more than 900 died.
22. The city of Pyarnu was entrusted to a garrison of not more than 250 men. Two detachments of our 100th Corps left for Tallin and my division proceeded to Aynazhi to guard the coast of the Gulf of Riga. After three days march we reached Aynazhi, and had not yet had time to take up quarters when we received an order to return to Tartu. The five days march from Aynazhi to Tartu exhausted the men, since they had been moving on foot from the time we left Leningrad.
23. It must be pointed out that the frequent shifting of troops from place to place, thus forcing them to leave campaigns unfinished and to return to their old positions (all on foot), led to the army's complete exhaustion. The great shortage of men and complete absence of transport for both men and equipment necessitated such shifts. If it had not been for the snail's pace and disorganization caused by the unnecessary shifting of troops, the Soviet Army would have reached its goal much more quickly and would also have saved hundreds of thousands of lives in the process. These primitive methods of waging war--absence of transport, shortage of men and equipment, hauling of artillery by hand by hungry and exhausted soldiers--seem to confirm the theory that the Soviet Army feared a long, drawn-out war more than the Germans. The lengthening of the war also increased the number of deaths from starvation.

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24. The positive factors bringing victory to the Soviet forces were the strengthening of the Soviet Army through American foodstuffs and equipment, but most important of all, the defection of Germany's allies, as a result of which the Germans had to withdraw dozens of detachments and units from the Eastern Front; I need not mention the opening of the Second Front. All these factors saved the Soviet Army in spite of its primitive methods of warfare and senseless troop shifting.
25. From Tartu our army was transferred to Poland. During August and most of September 1944, our leaders were unable to repair the damaged railway line to Estonia, and we again returned on foot to Pskov. They were unable to repair the railroad because there were neither specialists nor the required material resources on hand; rails, ties, spikes and other materials. There was also no truck transport available. After we had spent five days on the march, covering the 150-160 kilometers from Tartu to Pskov, we received rail transportation for the first time in the war and we were moved to Polish territory. During the second half of October 1944, we detrained in the Malkino-Gurno area and remained there until 14 January 1945. Since there was nothing to take from the Poles or to bring from the USSR, the army again began to starve. Until 14 January 1945, i.e. the day our forces broke through German defense fortifications, the army lived on half-rations, consisting exclusively of American products.
26. On 14 January 1945, without particular effort or loss on the part of the Soviet Army, the German defense was broken in the Gorynyshe area and we triumphantly marched towards Novyy-Dvur where we crossed the Wisla and marched on Kutno, Bydgoszcz and Danzig. Our army, including my division, did not have any particular combat mission. However, upon arrival at Gorynyshe, a suburb about 8-10 kilometers from the center of the city of Danzig, we were ordered either to drive the Germans into the sea or to take them prisoner. The enemy had created strong defenses on the approaches to Danzig and had organized sufficient resistance to enable him to load his army and equipment onto a great number of ships, which had been held in reserve. The Soviet command, in particular the commander of the 3rd Baltic Russian Front, Marshal Rokossovsky, gave an excellent accounting of itself. Rokossovsky took all steps possible to prevent the enemy from escaping unpunished. With the aid of about 20 planes almost all of the ships heading out to sea were sunk. All of the Germans with the exception of a handful were drowned and there were few prisoners. However, the Germans in Danzig, for some reason, refused to surrender, as they had done in other sectors of the front. My division, approaching from the direction of Gorynyshe, was the first to enter the city and for the next 16 hours participated in street fighting. Our losses were considerable; in the 250th Infantry Regiment only 300 men survived. The other regiments were also hurt up in the street fighting. In operation Danzig, the 100th Corps lost 50% of its men. For the brilliant successes of our division in being the first to enter Danzig, and for the 16-hour street battle, the division received the title "Suvorov" and the men were rewarded with decorations and medals.
27. On 9 April 1945, we left Danzig and headed for Stettin. Along the way we met no resistance either because other units and detachments had preceded us or because there were no Germans left; the latter is more probably true. In Stettin our unit did not take part in the battles for the city. In general it was difficult to determine who was fighting and who was deserting and plundering the city. The city was overcrowded with units and detachments and each wanted to take advantage of the situation. They robbed, raped, burned and ran wild through the streets.

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28. From Stettin, the 2nd Shock Army proceeded without rest to the island of Ruegen and was entrenched there until after the German capitulation. It was not until 11 May 1945 that we turned command of Ruegen over to the 50th Cavalry Corps, and set off for Stralsund, Greifswald, Anklam, Neubrandenburg, Waren, Gustrow, and Krulus, 24 kilometers from Schwerin. There we paused and remained until 1 July 1945, ie until the day the Allies moved back to the new occupation lines and we took over Schwerin, Gadebusch, Wismar, Schoenberg and other cities.
29. To give a detailed account of our missions is almost impossible. With the exception of several important battles during the Leningrad blockade (which consistently ended in defeat; [redacted]) and several other battles - at Vyborg in Finland, at Pskov, Tartu, and Pyarnu, and finally, the great battle for Danzig, we fought without combat missions. This was true because the territory was too quickly cleared out, or to be more precise, because our advance outstripped our orders from above. Our active work consisted mainly in organizing the plundering of German material resources and shipping them to areas deep within the USSR. The German army and people were gripped by a terrible fear of the barbaric Bolshevik-Communist marauders and ravishers. They ran from us not only to the Allies but also burned, hung, shot and drowned themselves, anything to escape the hands of the Soviet Army.

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